

New Life Fellowship Staff Midday Prayer Guidelines

04/22/09

- ◆ Remember, an Office is a time to STOP, SLOW DOWN, CENTER, and PAUSE to be with Jesus. Our goal is to create a continual and easy familiarity with God's presence in each day.
- ◆ Notice the silence at the beginning and during the Office. When silent, seek to sit still and straight. Breathe slowly, naturally and deeply. Close your eyes, remaining present, open and awake. Don't hurry. Less can be more.
- ◆ Be sure to read the texts/prayers aloud, slowly, prayerfully and thoughtfully.

For the Leader/Facilitator

- 1) Bring a watch with a second hand (to time the silent moments), the devotional reading and copies of the guide you have prepared.
- 2) Arrive in the room where the office will be held 15 min prior to the office. Set the chairs in a circle and place one guide on each chair, and then wait quietly for the staff to arrive.
- 3) The worship leader will bring two songs (one to open with and one to close with). They will put these on the chairs.
- 4) The opening song should start right at 12:00. Do not wait for others to arrive, start on time!!!
- 5) After the opening worship song say something like "let's read together" and begin reading the invitation. Set the pace for everyone else by reading clearly and loud enough to be heard. Maintain a tempo of reading that is comfortable for you and the room.

Structure of the Office

- Waiting in silence
- Opening worship song (start at 12:00)
- Invitation verse(s) followed 2 min's of silence
- First Scripture reading from a psalm followed by a 30 second pause
- Second Scripture reading from a psalm followed by a 30 second pause
- Third Scripture reading (new testament)
- Devotional (mention who wrote the devotional) Say something like "this reading is from..."
- Use only 2-4 paragraphs.
- 5 min 's of silence
- The "Our Father" followed by a 30 second Pause
- Closing prayer or Scripture followed by a 30 second pause
- Share key prayer/intercession areas, break into groups and pray
- Closing worship song followed by a 30 second pause
- At the end of the song you and/or the worship leader will pause and say AMEN.

As the office unfolds, be sensitive to time adjustments. Keep it somewhere between 25- 35 minutes.

Preparing the Handout

Use Scriptures and a devotional that have been meaningful to you. Spend time during the week prior to sharing paying attention to how God has been speaking to you.

We primarily use the Psalms for the Scripture readings as they are our Prayer Book from Scripture. Include all prayers and scripture reading in the guide so that everyone can read aloud with you.

The devotional should be contemplative-oriented not a teaching but a reflection or meditation on a theme related to contemplation (about 2-3 paragraphs). Readings from Henry Nowen, Evelyn Underhill or Oswald Chambers work well.

The length of the guide is usually from one page to no more than a page and a half. To ensure that what you have prepared is not more than 20 to 25 minutes, practice reading through the guide and the devotional out loud timing yourself. The opening and closing worship song will complete the time. There is 5 minutes of silence built into the midday prayer, so you are preparing about 10 minutes of slow thoughtful Scripture reading and 5 min of you reading the devotional.

Use this as an outline for the guide

Worship song

Invitation: this is an opening prayer scripture or thought (one sentence or phrase)

2 min pause

Psalm (5 to 10 verses)

30 sec pause

Psalm (5 to 10 verses)

30 sec pause

New Testament reading (5-10 verses)

30 sec pause

Devotional

5 minute pause waiting on God

Our Father

Concluding prayer (Written out)

Time of intercession (Groups of 2, no more than 3)

Worship song

The following is a sample of how the guide could look

Opening song**Silence and Centering**

16 This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look;
ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it,
and you will find rest for your souls. **Jeremiah 6:16**

Silence 3 minutes**1st Reading**

- 1 He who dwells in the shelter of the Most High
will rest in the shadow of the Almighty.
- 2 I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress,
my God, in whom I trust."
- 3 Surely he will save you from the fowler's snare
and from the deadly pestilence.
- 4 He will cover you with his feathers,
and under his wings you will find refuge;
his faithfulness will be your shield and rampart.
- 5 You will not fear the terror of night,
nor the arrow that flies by day,
6 nor the pestilence that stalks in the darkness,
nor the plague that destroys at midday.
- 7 A thousand may fall at your side,
ten thousand at your right hand,
but it will not come near you.

2nd Reading

- 9 If you make the Most High your dwelling—
even the LORD, who is my refuge—
10 then no harm will befall you,
no disaster will come near your tent.
- 11 For he will command his angels concerning you
to guard you in all your ways;
12 they will lift you up in their hands,
so that you will not strike your foot against a stone.
- 13 You will tread upon the lion and the cobra;
you will trample the great lion and the serpent.
- 14 "Because he loves me," says the LORD, "I will rescue him;
I will protect him, for he acknowledges my name.
- 15 He will call upon me, and I will answer him;
I will be with him in trouble,
I will deliver him and honor him.
- 16 With long life will I satisfy him
and show him my salvation."

Psalm 91

New Testament reading**Matthew 11:28-30**

28"Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest.
 29Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."

Devotional reading

So for us, made (and in Christ remade) in Gods image, there remains a rest. In its essence, rest is more than leisure or napping or "time on our hands." God's rest for us involves freedom – to trust, to live out His dream for us, to work, create, play, let go and move on.

The rest God offers is the freedom to be fully present in the moment, free to reflect and enjoy what has been; to let go of the deficits and regrets that wear us down; free to envision what will be, what we are being re-created for; free to unburden ourselves of regretful thoughts about our yesterdays and anxious thoughts about our tomorrows.

From *The Attentive Life* by Leighton Ford pg 178

5 minutes of waiting in God**The Our Father**

Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.

Closing prayer

9There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; 10for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his.
 11Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience. Hebrews 4

Share key prayer/intercession areas break into groups and pray

Closing song